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THE NEW CHRISTIANITY

A CHURCHMAN'S FORECAST OF SOME OF ITS PROBABLE FEATURES

By DR. FREDERIC H. WOOD

THE other day a clergyman who had just read my new pamphlet, *A Challenge to Sceptics* (published by *The Two Worlds*) wrote asking why Lady Nona (Rosemary's guide) had waited 3,300 years to deliver her message. It was a friendly letter, and at the next sitting with Rosemary I put the question to Nona herself. She replied, "Tell him that during the past hundred years or so there has been—and is at present—a concerted attempt to get through the truths concerning immortality and the persistence of personality. This problem had to be approached in as many ways as possible, at the same time, so as to bring interest to many widely different people. Some concentrated on physical manifestations, some on "voice"—you know all the different forms of contact. I, on my part, have only two things to perform: first, to attempt to prove that I am still myself, and after such (to you) long period of time; secondly, to get through some of the teaching I have acquired in my long experience."

Readers who saw my article in *LIGHT* (Oct. 7, 1932) on Nona's language-tests of ancient Egypt, may recall that she used these to prove her identity as one who had lived on Earth during the 18th Egyptian Dynasty (about 1400 B.C.). Her answer to the clergyman (Vicar of a well-known parish in the Midlands) is consistent with the view held by many students that a great spiritual "drive" to convert the world is in progress from the other side. The work of A. J. Davis, Allan Kardec, Stainton Moses, and many others, bears testimony to the direction of this "drive" by the higher celestial powers. Signs are not wanting that the "drive" is succeeding. No one can foretell when the last barriers of Materialism will go down before the onslaught, but some of us may already see around us the beginnings of a New Christianity.

The discussion which followed my recent article on "The Church's Opportunity," (*LIGHT*, Feb. 10, 1933),

showed little hope that the Church would soon incorporate psychic demonstrations in support of her beliefs; and I am afraid we must reluctantly agree that Christianity and Churchianity are two separate things. On the other hand, this need not prevent us from forecasting the nature of the coming New Christianity, even though the Church of Christ be the last to accept it: and I should offer the following outline as being likely to embrace some of its most important features.

1. THE TEACHING OF JESUS.—I place this first because the New Christianity must follow the example and teaching of its Founder. But it will be a following which finds in His humility, love, and service the main reasons for acceptance, rather than a fear of the penalties which were formerly held to follow their non-acceptance.

2. SURVIVAL.—The Resurrection will be accepted—not as a principle of Faith—but as a credible fact proved by the analogy of similar phenomena well known to psychic students. Our own survival will also be accepted not as occurring at some far-off Judgment-Day, but immediately after the death of our physical bodies.

3.—SPIRIT-COMMUNICATION. This fact, now held to be impossible by many Churchmen and most materialistic scientists, will be accepted and practised by all who desire it. It will bring comfort to all who mourn, help to those who need spiritual counsel, and bind this world and the next in the closest bonds of mutual service.

4. THE HOLY EUCHARIST.—There is no reason whatever why this beautiful sacrament should be abandoned. On the contrary, it will be restored in all its original beauty as a Service of praise and thanksgiving, as its name implies. Not only will it retain its spiritual value as a link with Christ, but it will have an added value as a conscious means of union between those on either side of the veil in whom the love-bond is unimpaired. Many Christians feel this already, intuitively, but the new Faith will give it a sense of reality. Other implications of this Holy Office will be retained or discarded according to their agreement or otherwise with the known facts of a more enlightened Faith.

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THE NEW CHRISTIANITY

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5. **DOGMA.**—This will change its form. The only dogmas which will matter to the new Faith will be those which are consistent with ascertained Truth. Others which are unverifiable may be retained or discarded, according to individual opinion. Certainly there will be no more burnings of "heretics," or even ostracism, merely because they do not hold an official belief. That form of stupidity will pass for ever. Many dogmas, formerly considered vital, are already disintegrating. Others will be modified to meet the new knowledge.

6. **MINISTRY.**—As long as public worship is practised and observed, it will be necessary to have leaders of worship, ministers, and pastors. But these will gradually assume more and more the role of "shepherd" to their flocks, in the sense practised by Our Lord Himself. There will always be a necessity for stipends, but there will not be the same discrepancy between the salaries of high dignitaries and lowly ministers, as obtains at present; nor will there be the same desire to reach and retain either prestige or temporal power. The greatest among them will truly be the servant of all. I know many bishops who strive to fulfil this obligation already. Their example will help to promote the New Christianity. It is also possible that the clergy may themselves not only recognise mediumistic gifts, but develop them; and the "choice of fit persons" for Holy Orders may at no distant date include both psychic knowledge and some personal mediumistic faculty. Our Lord had both, and used them freely in His great work.

7. **CONDUCT.**—This will be emphasised as the only criterion by which men and women may attain "eternal life." Mere acceptance of any belief will not count. Hence the present belief—still widely held among certain Christians—that "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin" will give way to the more rational truth that "Man makes his own future, stamps his own character, suffers for his own sins, and must work out his own salvation." (IMPERATOR, THROUGH STAINTON MOSES, *Spirit Teachings*, SECT. XXXI.) Hypocrisy will gradually cease, as it automatically ceases in the Spirit-world. Conduct itself, being open to spirit-guides, will become more open to those who are still in the body, as their spiritual faculties and vision steadily develop.

8. **REINCARNATION.**—This belief, not yet recognised by the Church—though apparently endorsed by Jesus, (S. MATT. XVII. 12, 13)—will gradually be accepted, I think, by the adherents of the New Christianity. The Rosemary guides have discussed it very fully, and some day I hope to publish their statements. At present, the Churches concern themselves wholly with this life and that of the world to come—wisely so, perhaps, since they are of primary importance. But if the study of human life as an eternal progression may help to provide some clues to the many perplexities of our present life, the time may soon be ripe for them to consider whether their teaching might be extended to include some recognition of spiritual laws which appear to have shaped our present existence according to our conduct in a far-distant past: laws which may govern our individual development in ages yet to be.

9. **RITUAL.**—I have left this until the last because I wish to conclude with Nona's words, spoken through Rosemary just after she had written the reply to the clergyman's question at the beginning of this article. Nona said, "It is a thousand pities that the great teaching of Christ is not allowed to stand in its own purity and simplicity. All the cancerous growths, forms, traditions, useless ceremonies which are clinging to the body of His teaching are vain attempts by man to impress himself on the Will of God. They are cancerous because they eat away the body until nothing is left but themselves. The temple-ceremonies in Our Lord's time had grown until there was nothing left of the original teaching.

That was why He hated them so much. It is hard to find it happening again. All His teaching centred round the two simple facts that God is Love and that man's whole thought should be for his neighbour's good. All other forms and ceremonies are useless. Sometimes we feel that Christ still bleeds. Sometimes we wonder whether He will have to repeat His great sacrifice."

These words from an advanced spirit who has proved her credentials may not appeal to sacerdotalists, but they explain, perhaps, another reason for the present spiritual "drive" which has made the past century more significant than any other since the birth of Christ: and the New Christianity will possibly approach more nearly to the ideal of its Founder than any of its preceding types, if it can hold within itself the substance rather than the shadow of His beautiful teaching.

LADY COBHAM ANSWERS CRITICISM

SOME of the criticisms and objections most commonly urged against Spiritualism are answered pointedly and effectively in a letter by Viscountess Cobham, of Hagley Hall, Stourbridge, Worcester, published in the *County Express* of September 9th.

"Some seem to think," Lady Cobham writes, "a Medium must necessarily be a lady with large, dark eyes and gold rings in her ears, while others, I'm sure, think that a gipsy costume conceals horns and a tail. A Medium is simply any person of any age (sometimes a small child) who has the gift of 'discerning spirits' (1st Cor. xii), and is therefore an intermediary between this world and the etheric world, and in my opinion part of God's wonderful plan for helping those in sorrow.

"I know many Mediums who would consider they were debasing their Heaven-sent gift by taking money, and wouldn't dream of doing it. One striking instance of this, personally known to me, is a husband and wife in quite humble circumstances. The woman is a Medium, and the husband a spiritual healer. I dare say their salary is £3 a week. Though they work hard all day they give their spare time to comforting those in sorrow and healing the sick, nothing would induce either to take a penny, in spite of what would to ordinary people be a great temptation, the opportunity of making £15 or £20 a week . . .

"One correspondent says that because some Spiritualists base their belief on the Bible, 'the house is divided against itself.' May I point out first that belief in survival has not necessarily anything to do with religion, though personally I do not know a Spiritualist who is not a Christian—the proof of survival tending to reassure doubters and convince agnostics. However, that we have etheric bodies which survive bodily death is simply a scientific fact, and nothing to do with religion. With regard to the 'house being divided,' are Christians always unanimous in detail about their beliefs . . ."

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN ENGLAND

Public Lectures by Dr. L. J. BENDIT.
Sundays, 7 p.m., at 94, Lancaster Gate, W.2.

Sept. 24. Self-Knowledge I. .

October 1. Self-Knowledge II.

„ 8. Fate or Freewill.

All particulars from 45, Lancaster Gate, London, W.2.

PASSING OF MRS. ANNIE BESANT

Mrs. Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society, died at Adyar, India, on Wednesday, September 20th, in her eighty-sixth year.

MRS. ANNIE BESANT has ranked for nearly half-a-century as one of the greatest woman orators in the world, if not the greatest. Her earlier years were troubled and turbulent. She was associated with Charles Bradlaugh in a cause which brought her much public obloquy; and for a time she was one of the brilliant band of militant intellectual Socialists—the Fabians—which included George Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb and others, who still survive, as well as many equally famous who have passed on.

It was through her journalistic association with W. T. Stead that she was first brought into direct touch with the Theosophical movement. She had been for some years engaged in an enquiry regarding the phenomena of Spiritualism when, sitting in the Fleet Street office of the *National Reformer* (of which she was joint editor with Bradlaugh), "brooding over her disappointments in the search for Truth, she suddenly heard a Voice say to her, 'Are you willing to give up everything for the sake of learning the Truth?'" She did not know who it was that spoke, but she answered, "Yes, Lord."

A few days later (says Mr. C. Jinarajadasa), W. T. Stead, then Editor of the *Review of Reviews*, sent her Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* to review and "the moment she read the work it was as if a long lost synthesis of truth suddenly flashed out in her mind. She asked for an interview with the author, and from that first sight of Madame Blavatsky, Annie Besant's whole life was changed. She separated herself from her Secularist friends and also to some extent from Socialism," and became in turn Madame Blavatsky's disciple and successor. In 1907, she was elected President of the Theosophical Society—a position she retained to the end, although latterly there were sections of the Movement, chiefly in America, which did not acknowledge her leadership.

In November, 1893, Mrs. Besant landed in India for the first time and a new and important chapter of her life began. She went as President to the headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, but gradually she identified herself more and more with the people of India and ultimately became a leader in the India Home Rule movement. When the great war broke out in 1914, she was suspected by the Government and was interned for a few months. "No statesman in Britain nor the British officials in India seemed to realise," writes Mr. Jinarajadasa, "that Dr. Besant was not an agitator working up an agitation, but rather a far-sighted leader who saw the need to open up a festering wound whose poison would otherwise permeate the whole organism." On being liberated, she was elected President of the National Congress; but she speedily lost her popularity with the masses in India by opposing Ghandi's non-co-operative movement. With some of the moderate Indian politicians, in 1925, she prepared the Commonwealth of India Bill, which was introduced into the British Parliament, and which prepared the way for the efforts now being made to formulate a constitution for India as an integral part of the British Empire.

Occasionally, Mrs. Besant came to this country on a lecturing tour and always she drew great audiences whenever she spoke and whatever her topic, for she was an orator of the first order, but in the closing years of her life India was her home.

Mrs. Besant wrote books sufficient to crowd a moderate-sized library. The full list shows 326 works up to 1923, omitting those written in collaboration with others. Most of these deal with Theosophy and allied subjects—the most important of all, judged by their influence, being probably *The Ancient Wisdom* (1897) and *Esoteric Christi-*

anity (1901), in which Theosophical beliefs and their relation to Christianity are explained in terms at once clear and attractive.

Unlike Madame Blavatsky and some other Theosophists, Mrs. Besant never attacked Spiritualism and never minimised the importance of its teachings. As exemplified in her book, *Four Great Religions*, her aim was to find points of agreement in belief and practice and to show how, in her view, all could be merged in the Theosophic Philosophy. She herself claimed to have a highly-developed power of clairvoyance, which she devoted not only to the study of the various phases of reincarnation (pre-birth and post-death) but also to the elucidation of scientific problems, as in her book, *Occult Chemistry* (1908).

Mrs. Besant held high rank in the Co-Masonic movement; she was Honorary Scout Commissioner for all India; and, in recognition of her work for education in India, the degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred on her when the Hindu University was established.

Although she was never directly associated with them, Spiritualists will join in doing honour to her memory. She approached Theosophy through Spiritualism; many, including the present writer, have been induced by the stimulus of her books to examine the foundations on which belief in Survival and supernormal phenomena rest, and so have been led through Theosophy to the firm ground of Spiritualism.

G.H.L.

"THINK AND SPEAK KINDLY OF EACH OTHER"

The following extracts from an address delivered by Mrs. Besant to the members of the London Spiritualist Alliance on October 21, 1909, indicate her attitude towards Spiritualism. They are taken from *LIGHT* of October 30 and November 6, 1909:

"I recognise on all sides brethren in the various schools of thought, all of us aiming at a single goal—the spiritualisation of the humanity to which we all belong; and there is one thing I may say here because I say it so constantly outside—almost always when lecturing to public audiences, almost always when referring to the life after death—we are bound to remember with gratitude the work done in the past by those of your leaders who faced ridicule, obloquy, and antagonism of every kind, in bearing testimony to the reality of human individuality on the other side of death; and the Spiritualistic method remains the only one that can be used against the materialist, the sceptic, the man who is not willing to go into the subject unless he can be furnished with *prima-facie* evidence for the survival of mankind after death.

"Over and over again, when dealing with the materialist and knowing he will not receive any evidence except that which will appeal to his senses and which he can gain without a long course of study and training, I have recommended such a one to attend a carefully chosen Spiritualistic seance in order that, breaking down the barriers of materialism, he may be able to listen to teachings which he scoffs at, until, to some extent, he is convinced. Yet, as many of you know, Theosophists hold that there are certain dangers in connection with Spiritualistic investigation, but, on the other hand, that is also recognised by the most thoughtful and earnest Spiritualists, and they—quite as much as we—warn people who go along this line of investigation of the dangers which beset the pathway of investigators—dangers against which it is necessary they should be on their guard.

"In bidding you farewell for a time I would ask all who are our Spiritualist brethren, as well as those who are Theosophists, to forget all antagonism, to think and speak kindly of each other, remembering there are many ways to knowledge and each man must choose his own way for himself."

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN PSYCHE

By STANLEY DE BRATH, M.I.C.E.

[FINAL ARTICLE]

THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

THE seven great teachers mentioned in the last article had all perceived that morality—truthfulness, clean-living and kindness—is the path to prosperity and peaceable life.

If we can trust Biblical chronology, Moses anticipated all of these. The date of the Exodus from Egypt would appear to have been about 1400 B.C. If the Book of Deuteronomy belongs to the forty years immediately succeeding, there is ample evidence that the Two Ways—the Way of the Blessing and the Way of the Curse—were plainly put before Israel at that date.

Some may think that a subconscious hankering after orthodoxy leads to me attach special importance to the Old Testament. That is not at all the case. My treatment is strictly factual.

The Bible differs entirely from any other sacred books with which we are acquainted. It combines the ancient history of the Hebrew people with instructions for their moral guidance, and from the very first it makes obedience to that moral guidance the primary essence of their religion. It is perhaps noticeable that, in common with the revelation to the nations already commented upon, it was given to a polygamous people—a fact that should mark that no special place is assigned to sexual morality. That it represents the historical consequences of disobedience to the Law as the “judgments of God,” is strictly in accord with the ideas of the time.

The Hebrew Bible (our Old Testament) was collated from much older material between 475 and 150 B.C., after numerous revisions which extended over these three centuries, up to the time when it was first given to the nation somewhere about the latter date. The first part—the Torah the Law of Moses) was held to be the literal command of Jehovah and was accepted as such by being made the Civil Law of Palestine.

I shall not enter upon any of the Messianic predictions (such as Deut. xviii. 18, and Micah v. 2) nor attempt to discuss the many problems that the text presents, further than to say that the old Church Lectionary seems to attach the same importance to the legendary, allegorical, or even to the entirely fabulous portions of the narrative as to genuine historical matter. These legendary portions are the natural result of the ideas of the compilers. To the Eastern mind, a fable (provided that it contains a moral lesson) is of much the same value as a fact. The compilers wished to bring out the special protection of the Hebrews by the One God of Righteousness, and they adapted their language to this end. To read these portions in Church is to preserve the Jewish tradition of special providences and to disregard the historical value of the record. It emphasises the *form* and ignores the substance.

It is obviously impossible to distinguish between the earlier and the later versions of the books and the dates of the originals, or to guess at the changes which the compilers may have made. We must take the Old Testament as it stands. “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah vi. 8). Or the words of Jeremiah (vii. 22)—“For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying Obey my voice and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.”

This treatment will lead to the conclusion that no specific texts are the Divine Commands but that the general sense of the teaching is the real truth. No one can read the record with attention and with an open mind, and miss

the fact that gross social injustice is *invariably* stated as the cause of the impending “judgments of God.”

That there should be a “Chosen People” at all seems to some a monstrosity. But, independently of the fact that the Hebrew nation actually devoted itself to Religion as no other has ever done; that its steadfastness and tenacity therein have preserved it for 4,000 years up to the present day, there was every reason why a nation should be so “chosen” to carry through successfully the religion which was to begin and end with that Religion of the Spirit which is independent of all forms of creed. Judaism had no creed other than the Unity and Righteousness of God.

The Patriarch, or “Great Father” of the nation to be, was a wandering herdsman living in a tent as the Bedowin now are. To him and his successors were given no creed, no priests, no temple, no law. Religion meant to “walk before God”—to be honest, clean and just in the affairs of daily life and to obey the voice of conscience. To do unflinching justice, to love tender mercy, and to speak unfaltering truth is the one and only way of happiness among men. That peace and prosperity follow naturally and by direct consequence upon obedience to the Will of God, is the fact. That fact is stated in the form of a Promise. The Promise is cast into the dramatic *form* of a Covenant. But we make a childish error when we imagine this legend to mean a verbal agreement between God and a Patriarch. To turn the drama into history is to falsify it. It is the dramatic representation of a great spiritual reality.

This, seen to-day to be the inner meaning and explanation of human Evolution, was the original idea in the Message to Abraham at the dawn of history four thousand years ago.

The idea of the Covenant was soon degraded into an obligation on the Deity to fulfil the Promise irrespective of conduct. The “Covenant” that man should be guided by God’s inspiration which is the knowledge of Right and Wrong, that he should walk by it and so become perfect, should receive prosperity and blessing and so work upwards to the goal of spiritual evolution in joy rather than in pain, is the idea that pervades the whole Bible. It is the idea of the Kingdom of God—a state of general well-being which results from God’s Will being done on earth as it is in the heavenly or spiritual state.

This was the essence of the Message of Jesus. He fulfilled the idea of Messiahship predicted in Deut. xviii. 18., and his rejection at the hands of the priesthood was the direct consequence of his contravention of the law of the Levitical code and all its prescriptions of clean and unclean meats and of Sabbatarian observance. He made no claim to Virgin Birth and he drew his inspiration from the fact that “God is Spirit,” as he told the woman at the well. He reposed the evidence of his mission on his power to heal, on his teaching, and on His power to lay down his life and power to take it again. “This man is not of God because he keepeth not the Sabbath” was the verdict of Legalism. So a common hatred united the plotters. They would arrest Him, try Him at a midnight sitting and hand Him over to the Roman power on an invented charge of sedition, justifying the lie to themselves by political necessity. Hence the hurried midnight trial to avoid a popular rescue by the crowd who knew him for a great prophet. He sealed his Messiahship by a heroic death.

Then came the Victory. The appearances were the evidence of his continued life. It was all true then! His teaching of righteousness and goodwill as the law of mankind and the seed of peace; spiritual power stood above the forceful prestige of Imperial Rome; spirituality was really a possibility for all men; God was an actuality; His Fatherhood and the Unseen World were real; the Kingdom of God was no mystical dream but an ideal to live for and work for. He had really entered on new life, no longer “straitened in the body.” He was independent

of time and space; yet he could be "born" in the soul of every follower, and would be with them to the consummation of the age. He was cosmic, unfettered by earthly conditions, verily and indeed the Ruler of the world, not by force but by indefeasible spiritual law. He was verily and indeed the Resurrection and the Life.

These truths are the foundation of the Religion of the Spirit. They were supported not by art or argument, but "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." There were prophesyings—not all true; there were "tongues," not all valuable; there were revelations, some of doubtful authenticity; above all there was healing. There were irregular mediumship and Corinthian disorder, but the manifestations were real and wide-spread; and the common conviction of the power of the Spirit working in weak vessels, the common devotion to the Master who declared, "I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold! I am alive for evermore," produced that opening of the hearts of teachers to the Power that makes for spiritual unity, and gave them courage to confront the vast organised forces of the Roman world, to make war on its corruptions and to prevail.

The same human desire for the finality which avoids thought, the desire for a rule of life, which had corrupted Buddhism and produced the Legalism of the Pharisees, operated to degrade the principles of Christ to a creed. Nicæa theologised his principles and incorporated a mythos; and, not long after, there set in those persecutions of "heretics" which were the disgrace of the Christian Church till the 19th century.

What are we to conclude?

Firstly, that the "supernormal facts," which are at last beginning to penetrate the educated minds of the present century, are realities—were, in point of fact, the starting-point both of Science and Religion.

Secondly, that both Science and Religion must be progressive. Science is concerned with the exploration of the world in which we live. Religion is concerned with our relations to this universe, to each other, and to its Creator. In both we advance by elimination of error as our minds grow to fuller apprehension of Truth. No theology is permanent.

What then is our conclusion?

What we specially need is to recognise that this law of Truthfulness means far more than to tell no lies or to practise a personal virtue that claims the personal reward which will come by natural consequence. It is to "do the truth" (as St. John puts it) in all our actions—social, commercial, political, and literary. It is a law which works consequentially and automatically in the world. Its observance brings what Our Lord called the Kingdom of God—the rule of the Spirit in all hearts. It works out in history—every act in the drama is produced directly and inevitably by the character of the men who put political forces into action. I have shown this in my book *The Drama of Europe*.

We are apt to think of Truthfulness, Clean-life and Kindliness as personal "virtues" or even to imagine that they are "merits." They are not. They are the lines of our evolution, of our growth and development. That is, they are a true law of Nature independent of all human interference—as automatic and inevitable as gravitation. Our notions of merit falsify the idea. We are either gaining life or losing it; working for or against the Kingdom.

There has, in the last two decades, been throughout the world an enormous increase in productive power. This advance has extended not only to manufacturing industry but to agriculture as well; so that on all hands the world is able to produce and exchange goods and services in greatly increased abundance. This improvement in productive power has everywhere greatly outrun the growth of population. Yet millions of men and women can find no work, and thousands of factories are standing idle because those who control them can find no means of

(Continued at foot of next column)

TELEPATHY RULED OUT

AS I know you like to record instances, however trivial, of communications where telepathy and the subconscious seem to be ruled out, I send you the following:

A few months ago, in a sitting with an unprofessional Medium, I was told by the Control that a relative of mine was present. The name Henry was given and a uniform described which was evidently a naval uniform of old days, and also a vessel described of the same date. I said I had had a great-uncle, Sir Henry Heathcote, who was an admiral and that the uniform was like that in his portrait but that he died when I was a baby and I knew very little about him. The Control then added: "As a clue, he says that he had a crushed thumb."

I had never heard anything of this and only knew of one person in England who could possibly know about it. This was a great grand-daughter of Sir Henry, whose acquaintance I had only lately made. I wrote to her, but she said her mother (who was a Heathcote) had died when she was young and in South Africa and she knew little of her relations here—she said however that she had an old aunt in South Africa (grand-daughter of Sir Henry) and she would write to her. I was careful, in making the enquiry, only to ask if she had ever heard of "any small personal blemish."

In due time the old lady replied, saying that she had never known either her father or her grandfather who had both died in her infancy, but that she did remember to have been told that one or other of them (she was not sure which) had "lost a thumb."

Notwithstanding the doubt between the two men, this confirmation seems to me interesting, and not to be "explained away."

I should add that I had never heard of the old lady in South Africa, and had only quite recently made acquaintance with her niece. Also, that I was entirely unknown to the Medium whose presence was obtained through a friend, and no one present except myself had ever heard that there was such a person as Sir Henry Heathcote, let alone any personal facts about him. I have not yet been able to find out anything about his ship, the figurehead of which was described.

ARTHUR M. HEATHCOTE

(Continued from previous column)

selling their products at a profit. These products are burned or cast into the sea to keep up the prices of the remainder, while millions are starving for want of them.

No one even attempts to deny that this situation is at once ludicrous and tragic. The fault is not with man's productive skill, but in our failure so to organise as to take advantage of these indisputable benefits. In other words, the fiscal situation is such as to *compel* us to think on world-lines—that is on lines of Universal Brotherhood, in no sentimental sense, but in actual practical action. The nations will have to take part in building up for themselves an organised world-system based on the reconciliation of national, rather than on the protection of vested interests. This is recognition of the Law of Spiritual Consequence. As we sow so shall we reap, here and now.

It is not the function of Spiritualism to propose specific remedies for the present situation. Nor is it the function of the Churches. That any effective remedy should be in accord with true principles will suffice. It is for men to apply those principles of genuine Spiritualism which are identical with the teachings of Christ. If they do, order will succeed to chaos and disarmament will be possible.

The human psyche has already developed up to the point that we can see that Right-Living is independent of any Church to which we may belong, however valid the claims of that Church may be. We have to develop further to the point of perceiving that agreement among leading nations is the very first necessity of the present day.

This will mark the full development of the human psyche.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(The views and statements of correspondents are not necessarily endorsed by the Editor, who occasionally prints, in the interests of free discussion, letters with which he does not agree).

SPIRITUALISM—RELIGION

Sir,—Rev. Wm. Reid (LIGHT, Aug. 25) suggests that some "mental recurrent fever causes Spiritualists and the various religions" to attack each other periodically. He seems to have a mild dose of it himself, otherwise it is difficult to understand his fresh "attack" on Spiritualists who claim Spiritualism as their religion. He insists it cannot be a religion, which he defines as a "way of life." Later he says, "The Mohammedans . . . many Jews, the S.N.U., many Christians: all of these have laid before us their way of Life, or Religion." The S.N.U. "way of life," or religion, is—Spiritualism. Presumably, Mr. Reid has some sort of subconscious realisation—which his clerical training makes him unwilling to admit—that Spiritualism is the religion of others, if not of himself.

Some months ago, in your columns, I suggested that Mr. Reid really had a better opinion of the mentality of those who claim Spiritualism as their religion, than to believe that they considered the mere belief in survival and communication constituted religion. I have seen no reply from him. Why, then, this fresh "attack" since he deplores attacks? I don't; they are good for any cause which has truth behind it.

Spiritualism is my religion, it is that of Mr. E. W. Oaten and many others who have some claim to speak for Spiritualists. None of us have ever said that *belief in survival and communication* is religion.

Let Mr. Reid or anyone who shares his view cite one representative Spiritualist who has made such a statement, and his criticism of it will be legitimate. But until he does so, any further "threepin" down our throats" that Spiritualism cannot be a religion may be assigned to "mental recurring fever."

The Editor of LIGHT focussed the issue very nicely when he said: "The Christian faith is based on facts: the facts of survival and communication." But the Survival was that of One—claimed as Deity by official Christianity for many centuries and accepted as such by millions of His followers. Spiritualism is based on the fact, demonstrated, of *human* survival. Obviously, that in itself is a much more wonderful event than the survival of Deity, temporarily incarnate; and consequently provides Spiritualism with a stronger basis as a religion.

J. B. M'INDOE,

(President of the Spiritualists' National Union)

* * *

CHRIST THE SUPREME PSYCHIC

Sir,—The statement of the Archbishop of York (that direct evidence of Survival is not either attainable or desirable), which Mr. Findlay quotes, was made to me. It appeared in LIGHT six months ago. While it clearly shows the ignorance and lack of experience concerning the fundamental psychic facts underlying Christianity which characterise the Christian Church to-day, it most certainly does *not*, as Mr. Findlay alleges, show that Christianity is not based on Survival and Communication. It is perfectly well known, both from New Testament records and the history of the Christian Church that Christianity *is* based on Survival and Communication, and the fact of Survival is stated by St. Paul to be the fundamental fact of the Christian faith (1 Cor. xv., 12-17).

Nothing that Mr. Findlay has stated in his book is of the slightest weight in proving that Christ was not the Founder and the central figure of Christianity or will minimise in the slightest degree the power, charm and attraction of His life and teaching, or of their effect on the hearts and minds of men. The fact that some of His teaching was based on the Hebrew Scriptures or had

been in some fragmentary way expressed in by-gone ages among other peoples does not detract in any way from His power and éclat as a teacher or from the majesty of His utterances; while the fact that He was a supreme psychic and Master of the spiritual powers and forces beyond any other person whatsoever, is unquestioned.

To the careful student of the New Testament it is clearly manifest that Christianity, as narrated of the Christ and the Apostles, is peculiarly associated with the phenomena of Spiritualism, above any other religious system on earth. The fact that the Christian Church of a later age fell into error concerning the phenomena of His resurrection and of the spirit-world is perfectly well-known and has been pointed out and emphasised long ago, but this is absolutely no reason why Spiritualism should be divorced from Christianity, much less is it any valid reason why Spiritualism should reject the Christ, the greatest Spiritualist who ever lived or ever will live.

The object of the truly spiritual worker should not be to separate in these matters but to bind closer together. Spiritualism must to-day accept the Christ as its greatest exponent and leader; and the Christian Church of to-day must return to and assimilate that practical Spiritualism which characterised its early days and which is fundamental to all revealed religion.

Weston Vicarage,
Yorkshire.

(Rev.) CHARLES L. TWEEDALE.

* * *

"THE ROCK OF TRUTH"

Sir,—I read Mr. Findlay's earlier book, *On the Edge of the Etheric*, with so much interest and pleasure that I am deeply disappointed and sorry that he should have written the present work. An attack on Christianity will not help the cause he has at heart.

It seems to me Mr. Findlay is too much obsessed with the idea of "either-or." Either a thing is true *or* it is false. Either we are all grossly ignorant, *or* grossly dishonest. The truth is often between "either" and "or."

Leaving the Catholic Church out of the question, a few Wee Frees and Fundamentalists may go on believing that the Bible is the literal Word of God throughout. Most educated people are aware that it is the literature of a people, written at different times, and containing books at very different levels of culture and spirituality.

Mr. Findlay should not lump together the spiritual insight of Second Isaiah or the deep religious feeling of the 23rd Psalm with the very human cry for vengeance by captives carried away by force upon the Children of Edom who taunted them in their misery. The former contains the "Word of God" because it is truth expressed in human experience: the latter is "all too human." "The letter killeth" and Mr. Findlay seems to me to attach too much importance to the letter, and not enough to the spirit.

We know the dogmas, ritual and liturgy, of the Christian Church are full of Pagan accretions. They are like fossils in a rock, and as fossils are interesting. Few people, I should think, take all of them literally. In any case, does it so very much matter? It is a righteous life that matters according to Christianity, and the Saints both past and present in all the churches are witnesses that even inaccurate beliefs may promote that end.

Mr. Findlay concerns himself needlessly about the antagonism of the Churches to Spiritualism. Truth must always prevail in the end, and what may be false in both Spiritualism and Christianity must perish ultimately.

JOAN CORRIE.

* * *

"SPIRIT FACES" HIDDEN

Sir,—Those of your readers who have seen or heard of the "spirit faces" under the Liddon window at Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford, will be sorry to learn that they can no longer be seen. They are hidden by the reredos of a new Altar. The face on the Lyttleton tomb is still more distinct.

JULIA M. SMITH.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Sir—In the letter from Mr. Aubrey Turle in *LIGHT* for August 25th, there were two points which were of interest, the first being that concerning wings. I believe that the idea of such appendages grew out of the thought that it was the only means of progress possible for beings who traversed the air, and that the higher spirits have fallen in line with it as a concession to the still childlike minds of many. Thus, to indicate a high state of spirituality, wings are shown as a part of an angelic figure.

Then in regard to the second point, that of the mystery of the appearance of evil in the universe, may I quote the following extracts on that very point:

"Evil is the negation of God's love. Love is an active force for good. Evil is but the cessation of active good. Neglect the good (it is so easy to stand idle) and let slip the good deed that you should have done, and in its stead there is the good deed's opposite; a negative state, a letting go of good, a slackening of the reins of thought.

"So, of his own neglect of good, did man create evil. So, of his neglect of evil, must he kill it, and bring to life again the active good, to function in his life."

This is taken from a message given to me by impressional writing. To those who may not understand the possibility of such a message coming in this way, I would point out that it is clear, logical and reasonable, and that it fails in no particular to explain this universal problem which, truly, up to the present, had remained a mystery.

ROSE MARRIAN.

* * *

OXFORD GROUP MOVEMENT

Sir,—“One Thing I Know,” by A. J. Russell (published by Hodder & Stoughton at 5/-) is a book to be read by every Spiritualist. Mr. Russell, who also wrote *For Sinners Only*, which has reached in English a circulation of 120,000 copies, and has still immense scope amongst those to whom it is addressed and others, is a leading exponent of the objects and missionary activities of the Oxford Group Movement which is not to be confused with the “Oxford Movement” of a century ago.

But what possible connection can there be between Spiritualism and the Oxford Group Movement? The answer is to be found in *One Thing I Know*.

Spiritualism and the Oxford Group Movement have much more in common than might be supposed, and a stable amalgam of the fiery zeal of the Oxford Group “Life Changer” and the precious metal of well-balanced knowledge of the spirit world, based on well attested facts of psychic science, may yet produce a weapon that will penetrate the best protected armour of ignorance and intolerance.

There can be little doubt that many members of the Oxford Group Movement have had psychical experiences, which, though seldom recognised as such, establish for them convincing evidence of objective manifestations and even communication, with the spirit-world.

JOHN ENGLEADOW.

* * *

AFTER-LIFE CONDITIONS

Sir,—Mr. Horace Leaf's paper on “After-life Conditions” is, to say the least, disquieting. Is it thinkable that an unfortunate man who is killed in battle can spend years in a state of delirium or nightmare?

I speak ignorantly, and therefore perhaps as a fool; but I should like to know whether it is not possible that coming back into these conditions may revive in the soldier the memory of the way he passed out, making him for the moment become what he was then; somewhat as, when we visit scenes of our childhood, we become children again in thought and feeling for the time being; also, perhaps, as, when awaking after an anæsthetic, we take up life where we left it, ignoring the intervening time. San Miniato, Italy.

ETHEL CORKEY.

[A number of letters to the Editor are unavoidably held over, including several on the subject of “Criticisms of *Light*,” which will appear next week.]

PRICE OF “LIGHT”

REDUCTION FROM FOURPENCE TO TWOPENCE ON OCTOBER 6TH

BEGINNING with the issue of October 6th, the price of *LIGHT* will be reduced from fourpence to twopence. There will be no reduction in size, and every effort will be made to keep up the quality and interest of the contents and, if possible, to improve them.

The Sustentation Fund is as yet £300 short of the £1,000 for which we asked as a preliminary to price-reduction; but, so great is the confidence that the full total will be forthcoming, it has been decided to take the step at once, so as to have the advantage of the autumn season in our efforts to secure wider publicity and a larger circulation.

Readers have helped us generously; we ask them to help us still further by recommending *LIGHT* to their friends. Next week we will have an interesting announcement to make regarding articles in which, along strictly scientific lines, new and valuable evidence of Survival will be given.

Meanwhile, we would remind readers that the Sustentation Fund is still open, and that the full sum of £1,000 is required to meet the temporary drop in sales-revenue expected to follow the price-reduction and to cover the extra expense of an advertising and sale-pushing campaign. Donations, large or small, will be welcomed and acknowledged.

Donations received since last week are as follows:

	£	s.	d.			
Mrs. I. Garrett ..	5	5	0	S. Gudjohnsen ..	15	0
Anon.	5	0	0	Mrs. L. Gair Wil-		
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ACCIDENT TO MR. R. H. SAUNDERS

READERS will regret to learn that Mr. R. H. Saunders has had an accident involving the fracture of two ribs and is in consequence confined to his house at Surbiton.

Since the publication of his recent article on the work of “Abduhl Latif,” appeals to be put in touch with the healer have—to quote Mr. Saunders' own words—“been rolling in by the score” (many without stamps for reply), not only from England, but “from Holland, France, Italy, and the remoter parts of Scotland and Ireland.” A number of these letters have been sent to the Editor of *LIGHT* to be forwarded to Mr. Saunders, and in every case this has been done.

Mr. Saunders informs us that some of the requests for help are for people who do not believe in “spirit-healing,” and that, naturally, there are special difficulties in such cases. In regard to other appeals, Mr. Saunders says: “Our spirit-doctors are not magicians and cannot replace organs destroyed, nor broken bones, but they can ease pain and clear the ground for nature to get in her healing work, and this,” he adds, “has been done for my two broken ribs.”

Notwithstanding his injuries, Mr. Saunders is dealing as rapidly as possible with the letters sent to him.

MR. ALFRED STEAD

The death has occurred at Dresden of Mr. Alfred Stead, the third son of Mr. W. T. Stead (and brother of Miss Estelle Stead), at the age of 56. He succeeded his father in the editorship of *The Review of Reviews* on the death of the latter in the wreck of the Titanic, and for some years was Consul-General for Roumania in London. We extend our sympathy to Miss Estelle Stead on this, the second bereavement she has sustained within a brief period—her mother having passed away recently. She is at present on holiday in Italy.

Light

All communications for the EDITOR should be addressed "The Editor of Light, 16, Queensberry Place, South Kensington, London, S.W.7." Phone: Kensington 3758.

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MR. WELLS AS PROPHET

MR. H. G. WELLS, taking once more upon himself the rôle of Prophet, has given to the world a sketch of the events which he foresees as leading up to the Materialist Millennium. Very terrible events they are, as set out in his new book, *The Shape of Things to Come* (Hutchinson, 10/6), including war and plague and the final collapse of Civilisation as it now exists; but, about the year 2100—that is, some 167 years from now—a condition of complete political and economic equilibrium is to be reached, in which there will be no kings or governments or parliaments, because they will no longer be required, and in which all religions will have been merged (by force) in one terrestrial faith, which he describes as "the moral expression of the one world-community."

In this vision of the future, Mr. Wells is concerned only with Mankind in the mass. The future he foresees is that of the race, not of the individual men and women who compose it. The race continues, the individuals are extinguished. In short, he visualises men and women as purely material beings, born of the dust and destined, as individuals, to return to the dust and be heard of no more. No doubt he also anticipates that, after millions of years of the perfect earthly state—during which men and women individually will be approaching nearer and nearer to mental and moral perfection—the Sun will cool, the Earth will be frozen, and perfected Mankind will be obliterated with the planet to which they belong. So that all the long, painful striving and scheming, leading to the perfect state and the perfect man, will end in—Nothingness.

The absurdity of such a climax clearly suggests that it cannot be true, and Spiritualists know that it is not true. "Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was *not* spoken of the *Soul*"; and although Mr. Wells has not yet recognised the fact, it is the Soul that is the real man—the Soul that can and does withstand the shock of

physical death and that, in association with the physical body, provides the mental and moral impulses on which approach to the earthly Millennium depends.

Mr. Wells does *himself* an amazing injustice. His real self, his Soul, looks backward to the beginning of life and forward towards its perfection—and yet he assumes that his powers as Historian and Prophet are derived entirely from certain chemical permutations taking place in the material of his body and brain. That, indeed, would be a miracle. By and by, it may be hoped, he will learn that this assumption is mistaken and that the chemical permutations are nothing more than the means—operating under directive spiritual control—by which he, the Thinker, is enabled to elaborate his philosophy and weave his brilliant phantasies.

And so is it with the other men and women, his fellow-spirits, who are even now working out their individual salvation, and striving for the salvation of the world, with fear and trembling because of the difficulties and terrors by which they are faced; but with the sure and certain hope—those of them at any rate, who *know* what they are—that their efforts will not be wasted, and that they themselves will not, as Mr. Wells supposes, "be cast as rubbish to the void," when the task is ended.

"HOW LONG"

"MAN AND THE UNSEEN WORLD" was the subject of a broadcast "talk" on Sunday evening, in the series "God and the World through Christian Eyes." Its substance was that the "unseen world" is real, that it makes its claim upon all men through the promptings of conscience, and that man's response ought to cause him to follow the highest that he knows.

That was quite sound, but, to the unbeliever, very unconvincing. How much better the argument might have been had the Lecturer—the Rev. Dr. D. M. Baillie—given even a few examples of how the beings in the "unseen world" occasionally break through and make their existence known. He could have taken such examples from the Bible—the Voice that spoke to Moses from the burning bush; the presence of Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration; the after-death appearances of Jesus—and had he, as he might, gone on to show that these are in line with modern examples, he would have given his hearers definite proof that the "unseen world" is real, and consequently worthy of their attention, instead of asking them to rely on unsupported belief.

How long will it be before Christian apologists and exponents realise that authenticated psychic evidences of the "unseen world" are available for their use? How long will it be before they realise that without such evidence their appeals for faith are vain except to those who already believe?

BOOK REVIEW

By H. F. PREVOST BATTERSBY

THE LIFE TO COME

THIS collection* of B.B.C. addresses forms a very interesting little volume. We are given the ideas of Primitive Man, of Greece and Rome, of the Great Religions of the East, and the Historical development of the Christian Attitude as to a future life, and, in the second part, various personal points of view.

Primitive Man did, and what still remains of him does, regard as a practical certainty some sort of renewed existence, though generally doubtful of the provision made for his reception, and having, therefore, any odds and ends he might require packed into his tomb; the king of Banyoro even lining it with the living bodies of his wives and retainers; and sacrifices, animal and human, being an accepted method for ministering to great men on their way.

The Primitive view of what awaits them varies from a cheerful extension of earthly activities—hence the burial with them of their life-time implements—to a dull and melancholy abode of shadows. The reappearance of the ghost in its own or an animal form is frequently expected, and the possibilities of reincarnation are very widely held. Belief differs as to the duration of the after-life, and as to its universal application.

The Greek view of the hereafter shifted with the centuries, but the poets and philosophers were generally hopeful, and even "featured" reincarnation; while Plato and the Neoplatonists approached our fourth-dimensional conception of a spiritual habitation.

The Stoic philosophy which dominated cultured Rome for the four centuries about the birth of Christ, regarded every human soul as a fragment of God, and believed in its rising after death to a plane accordant to the purity it had acquired; or, if reprobate, being trapped in the turgid air this side of the moon, and drawn back by the earth into a human body.

The views of the East, so varied are they, cannot be even hinted at in a paragraph; but they decline altogether a materialistic conception, and where they accept reincarnation, as they widely do, put no limits to descent into "a worm, fly, fish, bird, lion, boar, serpent, tiger, man," as one of the texts has it, or even into a stock or stone.

The feature, common to most of them, is the acceptance of man's responsibility for what befalls him—the creation of his own "karma."

The Master of the Temple discourses on the development of the Christian Attitude, and he doubtless realises his difficulties since it is perplexing, with so rapid a process, to say exactly what point has been reached, and whether it has been reached by the head or tail of the procession.

For example, he says, "By resurrection of the body, St. Paul did not mean a resuscitation of the material particles which were laid in the grave or burned with fire."

That presents a doctrine which would not yet appeal to many pulpits, from which the full-blooded hope of the resurrection is still preached.

Then again he speaks of "whatever process of education and refinement may await you on the other side of death." That may be a concession to the Catholic or the Spiritualist, but it would receive no endorsement from many parsons, and what a space away from an eternity of harping.

He recounts how the healing of the sick, a commonplace of apostleship, was gradually relegated, in despair of its efficacy, to the anointing of the moribund, since they could not survive to attest its failure. "Thus," he tells us, "the means of grace which had been intended to be a way of healing, was made a farewell sacrament."

The same spiritual degeneracy marked the Church's

attitude to the dead. "As with sickness, so with death . . . the early Christians buried their dead with something like triumph. . . . White was the wear at funerals, not black."

And what wrought the change? The abandonment of the Spiritualism on which Christianity was based. Everything in that long catalogue of St. Paul's—wisdom, knowledge, healing, miracle, prophecy, clairvoyance, tongues and their interpretation—was by direct contact of any layman with the other world. To it every dispute was referred, of deed or doctrine.

Then the Church, grown strong, self-conscious and politically minded, planted itself across the path of psychic communication. "*Salvus extra ecclesiam non est*," said Cyprian; and further, "*Ecclesia in episcopo*." It formed a sort of exchange; you had to call up the Church if you wanted to communicate with heaven.

"The Church was the one hope. The Church knew. The Church had the keys of the unseen world, and could control the passage of the departed through its many corridors." That was the beginning of the morass in which the Church wallowed through the dark ages. Christ was not caught by Satan's offer of "the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them"; the Church succumbed to it; and the Church got the kingdoms.

Dr. Maude Royden opens the Second Part. "My belief in a future life is based on the single truth that God is Love." It is curious how those who talk of spiritualistic uncertainties will base their faith on a mere human assertion. Even were it possible to describe the First Cause in any terms we can understand, none of these could elucidate His purpose with humanity.

Dr. Royden and Mr. Christopher Dawson expound at length the arguments that should persuade us that we survive death; yet it seems so much simpler to produce a survivor. Years ago, in Petersburg, a debate, at a State Council, as to the position of a certain island was enthusiastically described to me. It lasted for three hours; then someone fetched an atlas from the next room. Churchmen, to-day, are very like those Russians: they prefer all the arguments for survival to the atlas in the next room.

Professor J. S. Haldane, in a most interesting paper, suggests that a conception of personal immortality is an essential part of religion, but not that of individual immortality which is implied by Christian theology; and he concludes—"I become more and more convinced that at no period of the world's history has real and soundly based Christianity been more needed than at present."

Sir Oliver Lodge's contribution is the most definite and uncompromising he has put upon the air.

Professor Julian Huxley, as a zoologist, thinks that because we have ceased to believe in "the miracle of Jonah and the whale"—which was never more than a moral tale—we ought not to believe in any other miracles. Differing from Professor Haldane, he finds it "very difficult to imagine how anything in the nature of *personal* survival could be true. . . . The more we study human beings and the way they work, the more impossible it becomes to think of a man as a dual being, composed of two quite separate parts—a material part, the body, and a spiritual part, the mind or soul."

Well, as, incontestably, a man, while he is alive, *can* come apart, and be seen at the same time in two separate places, it does suggest that division at death is not impossible.

His other objection is more amusing. He says there is nowhere for souls to go. But souls don't go, they stay. Even if "astronomers give no encouragement to the idea of an abode for the souls of the departed," surely zoologists are not still imprisoned in a universe of three dimensions.

"Light" Editorial Telephone is now Kensington 3758 (not 3751 as before). Will readers please note the change.

**The Future Life*. A Symposium. London. Martin Hopkinson. 1933. 3/6.

THE OTHER HALF OF SPIRITUALISM

MRS. ST. CLAIR STOBART ON REINCARNATION

MRS. ST. CLAIR STOBART, speaking at the service of the Spiritualist Community at the Grottrian Hall, London, on Sunday evening, gave an exposition of her views on the very controversial subject of Reincarnation.

The word "reincarnation," she said, was not chosen as an expression of the beliefs involved, as it ignored pre-existence and post-existence. The word which included both was "palingenesis." She stressed the importance of the pre-existence idea, as otherwise they were only half believers in the immortality of the soul. "For though, as Spiritualists," she said, "we believe in the immortality of the soul at one end—the far end of earthly life—until we believe in pre-existence we do not believe in the immortality of the soul at both ends of human life, and that is only a half-belief in immortality."

For want of a better word, she said, she would regard the abiding Ego as the soul, and would affirm that the soul was not created at human birth, but has been in existence from the beginning.

"If, as the scientists affirm," she proceeded, "it has taken millions of years for the human body to evolve to its present status; and if, as Spiritualists believe, the body perishes in the grave while the soul persists for all time—thus asserting its superiority over the body—can we believe that the soul, so obviously of more importance than the body, can have evolved sufficiently during the few years—or sometimes only months, weeks, or moments—of its sojourn on earth, to justify an existence in Eternity? It might be answered that progression is attained *after* death in the spirit-world. But it is scarcely reasonable to assume that souls who have had no time to learn the lessons on this earth—or who have perhaps rejected their opportunities—should immediately, by the transition known as death, be qualified for spiritual advancement. This would be like sending a child straight from the kindergarten to the university without going through any of the intermediate classes.

"Of what use," she asked, "in the general scheme of things, would be the painful protracted evolution of the human body through the ages, if in the end it only serves the soul, in many cases, as a habitation for a few months, weeks, days or moments. Discipline of earth-life, schooling for the soul, seems to be the chief justification for the scheme of physical evolution; and the scheme of palingenesis, or reincarnation, alone provides that full use shall be made of it. If discipline of earth-life has any value for the evolution and development of the soul, it must surely be related in some more reasonable proportion to the result."

The trend of thought was towards the idea of a God of justice and of love; and the idea of justice was, she thought, the chief appeal of the doctrine of palingenesis. For it was impossible to reconcile the idea of a just God with the orthodox view as to the origin of the soul—one soul born into the body of a cripple, a criminal, a pauper or an imbecile; another born into the purple. Even equality of opportunity was denied. Indeed, it seemed, as a great Greek intellectual had said, that "Without the doctrine of reincarnation it is not possible to justify the ways of God."

She could not help thinking that one of the reasons for the prejudice against reincarnation might be that for certain weak natures the idea of Karma—the law of cause and effect—was less pleasing than the comfortable teaching of the Churches as to Vicarious Atonement, forgiveness of sins and death-bed conversions. Paul, however, was emphatic enough when he said: "Work out your own salvation . . . Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

INTER-RELIGIOUS CRUSADE

WHITFIELD'S Tabernacle, Tottenham Court Road, London, provided a fitting venue for the opening public meeting of the Inter-Religious Crusade, of which Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, leader of the Spiritualist Community, is the founder and chairman.

The chief object of the Crusade is "to demonstrate the points of unity which link all Religions and, by means of these points, to present a universal appeal based upon the teachings of the great Teachers of religion"; and, as a first practical step towards this end, a series of mid-day meetings has been arranged at which there will be speakers from different schools of religious thought, including as far as possible one from the East and one from the West.

Mrs. St. Clair Stobart presided at the first of these meetings held at Whitfield's Tabernacle, from one to two o'clock on Thursday, September 14, and the speakers were Mr. Laurence Housman (for the West) and Hari Prasad Shastri, D.Litt. (Hindu, for the East). There was a gathering of about 200 people, and although they did not include many of the class it is desired specially to attract—those who have ceased to take a practical interest in Religion—it was regarded as providing a promising start. A preliminary organ recital was given by Mr. F. A. Armstrong, F.R.C.O., who also accompanied the two hymns that were sung—the first being "O God, our help in ages past."

Mrs. Stobart, opening the meeting, said the desire of those promoting the Crusade was to show that, in essentials, there was unity behind all the great Religions, and to organise a united front against the attacks of unbelief.

Dr. Shastri, in an eloquent address, explained the fundamentals of the Hindu religion, which, in practice, he summarised as "love of truth and active benevolence" and "not to injure anyone in thought, word or deed." There had never, he said, been war waged in the name of the Hindu religion, which respected all life, including the life of the lower animals, who were regarded as the younger brothers of men.

Mr. Housman said the best definition of Religion of which he knew was "that which brings a man into touch with reality." Right relationship to his fellow-men was an essential to a right relation to reality; and in view of the muddle in which they found themselves, it was evident that mankind had made a sorry mess of their efforts. Man, in his search for reality, must use his reason, but he must also realise that reason was a limited instrument, not capable of reaching ultimate truth. As a guide in their search they could take the declaration that "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," and also that "the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." They heard in these days of the religion of Nationalism, but if they obeyed laws of Nationalism contrary to the "fruit of the spirit," they might be sure they were not in right relation to reality.

The Rev. A. D. Belden, B.D. (Congregationalist) and Rev. Leslie J. Belton, B.A. (Unitarian), also took part in the service—the former leading in prayer and the latter pronouncing the benediction.

At the second meeting, held yesterday (Thursday, September 21) at Whitfield's Tabernacle, the speakers were Rev. A. B. Belden (minister of the Tabernacle) and Abdul Majid (Muslim).

Two further meetings will be held at Whitfield's Tabernacle. Next Thursday, September 28 (from one to two o'clock) the speakers announced are Mr. Ernest Hunt and Dr. A. P. de Zoysa (Buddhist); and on Thursday, October 5, Rev. Basil Bouchier, M.A., and Mr. Shinobu Iwamura (Shinto). Later meetings are to be held at the Guildhouse.

MEURIG MORRIS SERVICES MARYLEBONE ASSOCIATION TO BE RESUMED IN AEOLIAN HALL SERVICE

MR. LAURENCE COWEN informs us that the Meurig Morris Sunday services (which, beginning in January, 1931, became a world-famous feature at the Fortune Theatre, London, until the sale of the Theatre last March) will be resumed at the Æolian Hall, New Bond Street, London, commencing October 22nd.

A long tenure of this beautiful hall has been secured; and, as the organ is one of the finest in the country (it cost £10,000), a feature of the services will be the musical accompaniments and recitals which will be under the skilled control of Mr. R. H. Botcherby.

Since March, Mr. Cowen has been actively engaged in arranging for appropriate headquarters for what will possibly in future be known as the "Power Fellowship," an order devoted to the educational and spiritual side of the movement which has always been the expressed determination of "Power" and the forces he represents. These efforts recently culminated in a proposal to purchase the freehold of an important building containing two public halls, with accommodation for some 1,000 and 500 persons respectively. It was, however, not in Central London, and that particular project has been definitely turned down.

As announced above, the Sunday services will be held in the Æolian Hall, New Bond Street; and an announcement will shortly be made regarding the acquisition of suitable headquarters for the "Power Fellowship" which will consist of a private membership distinct from the public services.

General Sir Pomeroy Holland-Pryor, K.C.B., who has been for some years an earnest student of Christian Spiritualism, and who frequently attended the Fortune Theatre services, has intimated his intention to devote himself exclusively to the support of "Power's" work.

MR. JUSTICE McCARDIE

MRS. MEURIG MORRIS informs us that, following the publication in *LIGHT* (Sept. 8) of a portion of a message (quoted from the Wimbledon Spiritualist Church *Circular*) purporting to have come from the late Mr. Justice McCardie, through the mediumship of Mr. Gerald de Beaurepaire, she has received particulars of similar communications received through other channels.

A nurse (whose name has been given to us) writes to Mrs. Morris as follows:

"On June 28 this year, I attended a circle given by Mrs. Annie Brittain, when a patient I had nursed for some time, who passed over early this year, brought Mr. Justice McCardie to speak to me through Mrs. Brittain's Control 'Belle.' My patient, who had had a slight acquaintance with Mr. Justice McCardie, said he had been helping him since he passed on. Mr. Justice McCardie expressed great distress that he had not had the courage of his convictions when he tried your case. He said he knew you were right but he felt that his fellow-judges and public opinion were against you. His concluding words were: 'If only I had had the courage. One word from me would have put the matter right and she would not have lost her case. If only I had had the courage.'"

Mr. John Clea, of Mount Pleasant Road, London, N.W., sent to Mrs. Morris notes of a long communication received in the name of Mr. Justice McCardie at a City Men's Circle on August 3rd. It included the following:

"When I saw her, pale-faced, before me (at the trial) I saw her turn into an angel with outstretched wings of gold. I said it was a mockery. I said I did not fear 10,000 million incarnate spirits. I knew she could not be false. . . A voice in my ear said: 'Now let her speak' . . . May she be protected from the flails of ignorance. . . I wonder if she sees the bright ones around her who have been on the rack? I will do all that lies in my power to make her pathway easy on the earth."

MR. ERNEST HUNT'S eloquent plea for a more general realisation of the harmonious relationship existing between Christian and Spiritualistic teaching, especially in connection with some of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, was listened to with undivided attention and appreciation by a large congregation at the Marylebone Association's service at Queen's Hall on Sunday last.

"If only," said Mr. Hunt, "people would remember that 'it is the letter that killeth—the spirit giveth life,' then would the true meaning of the teachings of Jesus and of the Christian Churches at large be better understood." The many ceremonials and doctrines of the Churches were but symbols of man's progress from the lower planes of being to the higher spiritual realities—to the real life of the spirit.

Mr. Hunt's address can be truly described as inspirational; its whole trend was, in the words of the American poet he quoted:

"Know, thou, O man, the root of sin in thee
Is not to know thine own divinity."

Mrs. Florence Kingstone's clairvoyance at the close of the address was marked not only by uniform success—every description was recognised—but by the evidence she gave of true Seership, for the messages accompanying the descriptions showed that she had entered into the very environment of the spirit people from whom she received the messages. Thus it was that she gained and kept the attention and interest of all present.

Mr. George Craze, who presided, referred to the coming price-reduction of *LIGHT* as an event of interest to the whole Spiritualist Movement. L.H.

STORY OF GLASTONBURY

The first of the L.S.A. Thursday evening lectures for the autumn session (October 5th) is of interest to all who have read *The Gate of Remembrance* or any of the other works based on the automatic scripts of the late Captain John Alleyne Bartlett ("John Alleyne") and of special interest to those who, at various times, have had the pleasure of listening to the lectures on psychometry and similar subjects given at the L.S.A. by Captain Bartlett.

The lecture is to be given by Miss J. O. Hartes, F.B.E.E., on "The Story of Glastonbury Down the Centuries," and it will be illustrated by special slides of "John Alleyne's" script pictures. Also, his original automatic paintings of the reconstructed Abbey will be on view, and Mrs. Bartlett (Carlyon de Lyle) will play the Glastonbury music of her own composition.

The proceeds of this meeting are for the benefit of Mrs. Bartlett and it is expected there will be a very full attendance. The lecture takes place on Thursday, October 5, at 8.15 p.m. The tickets—for which early application should be made to the Secretary of the L.S.A.—are 2/6 each.

A "DIRECT VOICE" EXPERIMENT

At the third annual Conference of "The Link"—the Association of Home Circles—an effort is to be made to receive direct voice communications in the presence of the delegates, who are expected to number between 300 and 400.

We are informed that at the first and second conferences (1931 and 1932), when the number of circles represented was respectively 21 and 26, efforts to secure direct voice communications were successful. For this year's conference—to be held on October 15th—the banqueting hall of Thames House, London, has been secured, and "to enable all to hear with equal ease, if the voices should not be strong enough, microphones and loud speakers are being installed."

Admission to the Conference, it is announced, will be limited to members of "Link" home circles.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

By MAJOR R. P. MORRISON

PROPHECIES dealing with the end of the world are always with us, and mankind has grown accustomed to smile knowingly when some new fanatic appears upon the scene with the old threat of coming tribulation and disaster.

The daily papers find it profitable to allot some spare corner to such fantastic news, providing the humorist with material for his wit, adding a measure of self-satisfaction to the self-satisfied, and giving a mild thrill to the timid. The great day comes and goes just like any other day, and one more prophet has cause to regret his temerity.

But those in quest of truth cannot afford to dismiss all such prophecies as idle tales, the fruits of charlatanism or ill-balanced minds, because the belief that we are living in the "last days," or at the end of a dispensation, is not confined to one prophet or one sect.

Many diverse schools of occult thought are in agreement upon this question, although they differ in regard to the accompanying manifestations. Some look forward to the advent of a great World Teacher, others to the second coming of Christ; but there seems a general consensus of opinion that the world has entered upon the period of tribulation mentioned in Biblical prophecy.

There is plenty of evidence for those who are diligent in studying the signs of the times; but such evidence will not be obvious to the superficial eye. "Business as usual"—the grossest materialist may see that something has gone wrong with that slogan. Someone has thrown a monkey-wrench into the world's economic and social works, and all hands are busy trying to repair the damage.

Who threw it, and why? Also, how much of the damage has been repaired by the World Economic Conference, and has the financial outlay involved been proportionate to the repair work accomplished?

Something is very wrong with the world, and nobody knows what it is, but any material interpretation would meet with greater consideration than a spiritual one, because mankind fears the unknown.

We have been told that the end of the world will come "like a thief in the night." Therefore those who are looking for supernatural manifestations will watch and wait in vain. The error consists in mistaking truth in the form of narrative for the actuality.

When Biblical prophecy tells us that "the heavens will open and angels appear," etc., it is not intended to be taken literally, any more than the story of Adam and Eve, or the Flood. But when men's minds become capable of receiving a more interior form of truth, it may well be said that the heavens have opened and that angels have appeared.

We are told that on the last day some will be caught up to heaven, and some left on earth. Here, again, spiritual truth in the form of narrative should not be taken literally. The "last day" represents a state of mind in which some will find the kingdom of God, which (we are told) is within each one of us, while others will still confine themselves to the pleasures and occupations of the flesh.

Those who look to see men and women soaring into the sky, in defiance of the laws of gravitation, will watch and wait in vain. Students of nature will know that God does not permit this external clothing of His to be rent by any cataclysm. And human nature, as exemplified in men and women, cannot be changed in the twinkling of an eye, or total disruption would ensue.

The new wine of the kingdom must be poured into earthen vessels with great care and discrimination, so that the texture of the vessels may be changed gradually to accommodate the new spirit without bursting asunder.

Spiritual truth must be spiritually discerned, and modern prophets would do well to pause before they

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endeavour to confine a mighty stage of evolution, involution and development to any particular day or days, marked by unreasonable manifestations. Such prophecies only serve to bring discredit on the prophets, and disappointment or despair to their followers.

And yet, there may be—there is, to some minds—a great truth behind them, which is sadly distorted by the attempt to give it a literal interpretation, and this provides the materialist with an opportunity to pour scorn upon all who believe in a higher life than the flesh.

The end of the world comes "like a thief in the night," and many millions will be asleep when the mighty Spirit of Truth creeps silently into the minds and hearts of men and women. They will not be "asleep" in the literal sense, but they will be so busy with their earthly ambitions and scales of values that they will be quite unconscious of living in a wonderful age, an age which sees the gradual displacement of the old dispensation by the new.

"Business as usual?" Yes, but what is happening to that business? Society as usual? Question the gossip-writers in the daily papers and weekly journals. Religion as usual? Question the leaders of religion. Marriage as usual? Study the divorce courts. Children as usual? Ask schoolmasters and parents. Young men and women as usual? Mix with young people, and note how their whole attitude to life has changed since the war. Weather as usual? Study the papers and personal experience.

The world we live in to-day is very different from the pre-war world. Nobody would attempt to dispute this statement, but how many would agree that the astounding change which has taken place in these few years has been caused by the advent of a new spirituality?

The world had grown soft and self-satisfied before the war, losing the spirit of Christ in the letter of observance. It is now in the throes of a new birth, and the very scoffers at all that has had been held sacred are instruments in the hands of a Power which is stripping the mantle of hypocrisy from off the shoulders of mankind.

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Friday, September 29th, at 5 p.m. MRS. BRITTAIN

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Clairvoyant: Mr. Thomas Wyatt.
Sun., Oct. 1st, at 7 p.m. Speaker: Councillor ERNEST MARKLEW
Clairvoyante: Mrs. Hirst.

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th, 1933.

11 a.m.—Dr. H. P. Shastri.

Clairvoyant: Mr. Glover Botham.

6.30 p.m.—Mr. Ernest Hunt.

Clairvoyante: Mrs. Hirst.

Sunday, Oct. 1st, at 11 a.m. Mrs. ST. CLAIR STOBART
Clairvoyant: Mr. Thomas Wyatt.

Sunday, Oct. 1st, at 6.30 p.m. Rev. C. DRAYTON THOMAS
Clairvoyante: Miss Lily Thomas.

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3—4 p.m.—Mrs. St. Clair Stobart welcomes inquirers.

6.30 p.m.—Open Meeting in the Grotrian Hall.

7 p.m. Mrs. Bird's Ladies' Healing Circle. For appointments write to Miss Robertson (Hon. Secretary).

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6.30—Mrs. Kelland.

October 4th. 2.30—Mrs. Helen Spiers.

6.30—Mrs. Livingstone.

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The Annual Bazaar will be held at the Portman Rooms, on Tuesday, November 28th. Members and friends are earnestly invited to send goods for the stalls to the Secretary

To facilitate the work of the Stewards at the Sunday Services, members are asked to bring with them their tickets of membership.

(SOCIETY ARRANGEMENTS CONTINUED OVERLEAF.)

SOCIETY ARRANGEMENTS (contd.)

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" " " " at 6.30 p.m. .. Mr. W. H. EVANS
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